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EIU Invites Prospective Students, Others to Take a Close Look

Sep-30-2008

Eastern Illinois University wants prospective students and their parents, as well as other interested individuals, to take a close look at what's taking place on its 320-acre campus.

And to help those folks take that in-depth look, Eastern has joined more than 300 universities and colleges nationwide by becoming a featured institution on the [College Portrait Web site](#), launched earlier this week.

The site provides high school students, parents, guidance counselors and other stakeholders with access to basic, comparable information about student characteristics, costs, student experience and learning outcomes for 302 public four-year colleges and universities.

The information is presented in a user-friendly format. The Web site provides an overview of the College Portrait report, plus an interactive map with links to all participating colleges/universities.

Each portrait is divided into three sections: Student and Family Information, Student Experiences and Perceptions, and Student Learning Outcomes. Data elements were identified based on input from student/family focus groups, feedback from the higher education community and higher education research.

College Portrait is a product of the Voluntary System of Accountability project, a partnership between the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) with funding from the Lumina Foundation for Education.

Since unveiling the College Portrait report format and initiating the recruiting effort in November 2007, nearly 60 percent of the 520 member institutions of the two higher education associations have agreed to participate in the project. This represents four-year institutions enrolling some 3 million undergraduates and nearly 60 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment in four-year public colleges and universities.

"The College Portrait places America's four-year public colleges and universities at the forefront of the higher education accountability movement," said Peter McPherson, president of NASULGC. "College Portrait is designed to be a trustworthy source of reliable data for prospective students, families, policymakers and the general public. It becomes the only voluntary accountability program that includes student learning outcomes and easily comparable information for a majority of the nation's public four-year colleges and universities."

"No one should be surprised that public higher education has taken the lead on accountability," said Constantine W. (Deno) Curris, president of AASCU. "Our institutions have a long history of commitment to public accountability and learning outcomes. College Portrait is being unveiled at a time when severe financial constraints for both families and state governments increase our obligation to provide dependable, accurate information in keeping with our public trust."